set up a nuclear safety research institute in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the purpose of setting up such institute and to what extent it will suggest ways and means to provide safety to our nuclear installations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has set up a Safety Research Institute (SRI) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu. Selected aspects of research relating to nuclear power plant safety, radiological and environmental safety, fire and industrial safety will be addressed during the initial phase of the project. The main objective of the SRI will be to carry out and promote safety related research in selected areas of relevance to regulatory decision making. SRI will bring together designers, operators and regulators for implementation of research programmes aimed at resolving safety related issues.

Bilateral relations with France

2522. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govt, have any proposal to improve bilateral relations with France;

(b) if so, the various steps taken in the direction during last three years;

(c) the outcome thereof;

(d) the fresh negotiations proposed to be made thereof; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, The Government have taken a number of steps for upgrading the bilateral relationship with France. A number of agreements have been signed and high level visits exchanged between the two countries, including that of President Chirac of France to India in January, 1998 and our Prime Minister to Paris in September, 1998.

Mr. Jean Claude Gayssot, the French Cabinet Minister for Capital Works, Housing & Transport visited India from 1—4 February, 1999. During the visit a Protocol of Intent for Cooperation in the Road Sector and a Protocol of Intent for Cooperation in Railways were signed.

An indo-French Forum has also been established to advise the two governments on ways and means for augmenting mutually beneficial bilateral linkages.

(c) There has been an increase in educational, scientific, cultural, commercial and economic exchanges between the two countries.

(d) and (e) The process of bilateral consultations is proposed to be continued and expanded further to the mutual benefit of both countries.

सुरक्षा परिषद में सदस्यता के लिए समर्थन जुटाने हेतु विदेश यात्रा

2523. **श्री गोपाल सिंह जी सोलंकी** : क्या **विदेशी मंत्री** यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) सुरक्षा परिषद में सदस्यता हेतु भारत के प्रयासों के लिए समर्थन जुटाने/निमित प्रचार करने की दृष्टि से अब तक विदेश मंत्रालय के कितने अधिकारियों ने विदेश यात्राएं की है;

(ख) उस अधिकारियों ने कौन-कौन से देशों की यात्रा की और वे वहां पर किन-किन अधिकारियों से मिले और

(ग) इन अधिकारियों द्वारा अपने दौरे के संबंध में प्रस्तुत प्रतिवेदन का ब्यौरा क्या है; और यदि नही तो इसके क्या कारण है?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती वसुन्धरा राजे) : (क) से (ग) संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद के पुनर्गठन पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के ओपन एन्जिड कार्यकारी दल में बहस जारी है । संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद के विस्तार या सुधार के मसले पर अभी तक कोई सहमति नही हुई है । यद्यपि स्थायी सदस्यता के लिए भारत की उम्मीदवारी की बात संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के 53वें सत्र को संबंधित करते हुए प्रधानमंत्री ने अपने भाषण में दोहराई थी और इस मामले को द्विपक्षीय यात्राओं के दौरान भी उठाया गया था, तथापि विदेश मंत्रालय इस चरण पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद की स्थायी सदस्यता हेतु भारत की उम्मीदवारों

के लिए समर्थन जुटाने अथवा अभियान छेड़ने की दृष्टि से अपने अधिकारियों को विशेष रूप से विदेश नही भेज रहा है ।

Refusal by China to have further talks

2524. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has stalled the next round of the Joint Working Group meeting on the border issue by refusing to fix a date for the talks;

(b) if so, the reasons why China has refused to have further talks on this issue;

(c) the details of talks held between both the countries during the past one year and outcome thereof; and

(d) other steps Government propose to take lo solve the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) The Joint Working Group (JWG) on the Boundary Question, set up by a decision of the Prime Ministers of the two countries in 1988, has held ten meetings so far. The last meeting was held in August, 1997 in New Delhi. The two sides are currently in touch to finalise the time frame for holding the 11th meeting of the Joint Working Goup.

(c) and (d) The two countries are in regular contact through diplomatic and non-official channel and, at various levels. Exchanges of visits of Parliamentarians, people-to-people exchanges, visits of political party delegations, and functional contacts in other fields, are taking place. I met the Chinese Foreign Minister during the Asian Regional Forum-Post Ministerial Conference in Manila on July 27, 1998. Vice-Chairman of the Chinese National People's Congress called on Hon'ble Speaker during the IPU Conference in Moscow on September II, 1998. Delegations of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) visited India in September and October, 1998. A delegation of Parliamentarians led by Shri S.R. Bommai visited China in October, 1998 to participate in the 6th General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Parliamentarians Conference on Environment and Development. The Sixth meeting of the India-China Expert Group, set up in 1993 to assist the Joint Working Group, was held in Beijing on June 8-9, 1998. The first Foreign Ministry level Consultations between India and China in the framework of the Protocol on Cooperation between the Ministry of External Affairs of Republic of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China were held in Beijing on February 25-26, 1999. During the consultations, which covered bilateral, regional and international issues, the approach of both sides was positive and forward-looking. The two sides agreed that the talks enhanced mutual understanding and agreed on continuation of the dialogue at various levels.

Efforts to improve bilateral relations in diverse fields are continuing. We seek a friendly, co-operative, good neighbourly and mutually beneficial relationship with China, our largest neighbour, on the basis of Panchsheel.

Use of Narcotics to Fund J and K militants

2525. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minisu r of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recently released annual "World Geopolitics of Drugs"
(1997-98) has identified the hand of Pakistani Government in using narcotics to fund militant organization in Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction in regard [hereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government are aware that Pakistan is aiding and abetting cross-border terrorism directed against India out of finances from different sources, including funds generated through trafficking in drugs and narcotics. Government are firmly resolved to take all necessary measures to counter terrorists, and are vigilant about material, financial or any other support extended from outside quarters in sustenance of activities directed against India.